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Notes

ABIIT, EXCESSIT, EVASIT, ERUPIT

It is the fate of familiar quotations to be both misquoted and misunderstood. Quintilian twice misquotes the above (*Inst.* ix. 3. 46 and 77), writing *erupit, evasit,* but his misquotation rather suggests that he did not fall into the error of modern commentators, who regard it as a climax. Ciceronian diction is rather subtle, and one is by no means justified in taking every battery of synonyms as a climax. It is the connotation of each term that is important, especially for correct translation. Latin is not Esperanto and every word carries an implication. One must recall, for example, that *abi* or *abi modo* in Plautine usage means "Begone!" "Go away and stop bothering me!" Hence in our passage one may begin: "At last he has gone," or, "Thank Heavens, he has gone." As for *excessit,* this is a military term, as exemplified in Caes. *B.G.* i. 44: *Loco excedere non turpe existimare.* Hence we may say: "He has abandoned his guns," or even, were it not commonplace, "He has thrown up the sponge." To come to *evasit,* this does not imply stealthiness; quite the contrary. Cicero amplifies it below with the words *Palam iam cum hoste, nullo impediente, bellum iustum geremus.* Hence we may say: "He has come out of ambush," or, "He has taken his stand in the open." The last, *erupit,* is harder, and might suggest *eruptionem fecit,* or the wounded lion bounding from his lair or, lastly, vomiting. Rather curiously it is chiefly the last idea, though somewhat coarse, that Cicero amplifies at the end of the chapter. *Erupit* therefore suggested to him *evomitus est,* as if Catiline's presence had caused violent nausea to the state. Hence to revert to Elizabethan English: "This vomit has been purged." However one may agree or disagree with these interpretations, one must note that Quintilian did not regard it as a climax and that Cicero amplifies each term in regular order within the same chapter, which does not point to a climax.

Other batteries of synonyms that are not climaxes will be found in Cat. iii. 16: *Omnia norat, omnium aditus tenebat; appellare, temptare, sollicitare poterat, audebat. . . . . Nihil erat quod non ipse obiret, occurreret, vigilaret, laboraret.* Better still is Milo iv. 10: *Est igitur haec, iudices, non scripta, sed nata lex, quam non didicimus, accepimus, legimus, verum ex natura ipsa arripuimus, hausimus, expressimus, ad quam non docti, sed facti, non instituti, sed imbuti sumus.* Cicero was extremely proud of this passage as an example of Gorgianic rhythm (*Orator* xlix. 165). It will be noted that, as rhythm, Quintilian's *erupit, evasit* is quite the same as our *evasit, erupit.*

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